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ABSTRACT

Written for children ages three to five, this book contains several stories and poems about play and safety by four boys and girls of ages seven to fourteen. Illustrations accompany the children's work. The book is intended to be read together by adult and child. It includes a section to assist adults in instructing children about safe use of playground equipment: swings, slides, climbing apparatus, and seesaws. (For safety books for ages six through nine and ages ten through twelve, see CE 020 052 and 020 053.) (CSS)

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LITTLE BIG KIDS

FOR AGES 3-5

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

PREFACE

This book was written by children, for children.

Except for minor editorial changes, the stories and poems remain essentially as the children wrote them. Noelle, age 7; Judy, age 9; Dale, age 12; and Stirling, age 14, were the writers.

The book is a "read-together" book for adult and child, and includes a special "Adult's Corner" at the back.

Learning and personal growth often take place when opportunity is provided for peer identification of problems and problem solutions. The presentation of children's own personal experiences, feelings, and concerns often has a better chance of influencing other children's behavior than adult rules and regulations.

This book is an outgrowth of that concept.

Four children were given materials from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The materials presented the potential hazards of playground equipment and the kinds of injuries children have received. The children were asked to read the materials, and they discussed them with each other and an adult. The mission of the Consumer Product Safety Commission was discussed with the children. Their concept of play and their experiences on the playground were also discussed.

With vivid imagination, they created the characters of Say-hey, a talking frog, some of Say-hey's animal friends, and other characters. The artist read their stories and based his drawings on the descriptions of the characters as the children imagined them.

These stories and poems express the children's desire to take risks and have fun, to identify their risk-taking behavior, and then reluctantly to consider the desired change in behavior. They clearly demonstrate that children, when given adequate information and the opportunity to consider their own playground experiences with each other, can learn about playground equipment dangers and ways of correcting their unsafe play habits.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
POEM	2
AT THE PLAYGROUND WITH SAY-HEY	3
THE STORY OF "BLUEY"	4
ADULT'S CORNER	10
SUMMARY	12

TO PLAY

ONE FINE DAY
WE WENT
TO PLAY.
WE MET SAY-HEY
ALONG THE WAY.
"SAY, SAY-HEY, HEE-HEE,
WATCH OUR FUN AND SEE
HOW SAFE WE CAN BE.
NOW AS WE WALK AWHILE,
GIVE US A SMILE,
TELL US WHAT SAFETY IS,
AND TELL US SOME SAFETY STORIES."

"VERY WELL," HE LAUGHED.
"I'LL TELL YOU WHAT SAFETY IS.
SAFETY IS BEING FREE OF HARM
OR DANGER.
I'LL TELL YOU SOME FINE STORIES
A CHILD JUST LIKE YOU ONCE TOLD ME..."

PLAY: THE MACHINES

JUNGLE GYMS, MONKEY BARS,
SLIDE, SWINGS, AND TOTTERS.
I LOVE THEM ALL, THOUGH IF I
HAD TO CHOOSE ONE,
JUST ONE MOST PRECIOUS PLAY MACHINE,
I'D TAKE THE MOST IMPORTANT,
FINEST, GRANDEST OF THEM ALL,
MY RIP ROARING, DYNAMO PLAY
MACHINE: ME.

AT THE PLAYGROUND WITH SAY-HEY

I WENT TO THE PLAYGROUND WITH MY FRIEND, SAY-HEY THE FROG. WE WERE PLAYING AND HAVING FUN ON THE TOWER, WHEN SAY-HEY FELL OFF THE TOWER AND BROKE HIS ARM. AFTER SAY-HEY GOT WELL, SAY-HEY SAID TO ME, "NOELLE, I WILL TELL ALL THE BOYS AND GIRLS TO PLAY SAFELY ON THE PLAYGROUND."

THE STORY OF "BLUEY"

THERE WAS ONCE A LITTLE GIRL NAMED "BLUEY." EVERYONE CALLED HER "BLUEY" BECAUSE SHE ALWAYS WORE BLUE.

ONE DAY HER MOTHER TOLD HER TO TAKE SOME COOKIES TO THE NEIGHBORS ACROSS THE STREET. "BLUEY" ASKED HER MOTHER IF SHE COULD GO TO THE PLAYGROUND AFTER. HER MOTHER SAID OKAY.

SO, SHE WENT ACROSS THE STREET AND TOOK THE COOKIES TO THE NEIGHBORS. THEN SHE WENT OVER TO THE PLAYGROUND. SHE REMEMBERED NOT TO CLIMB UP THE SLIDING BOARD BECAUSE LAST WEEK HER LITTLE COUSIN FELL BACKWARDS WHILE CLIMBING UP THE SLIDING BOARD AND HIT HER HEAD ON A ROCK.

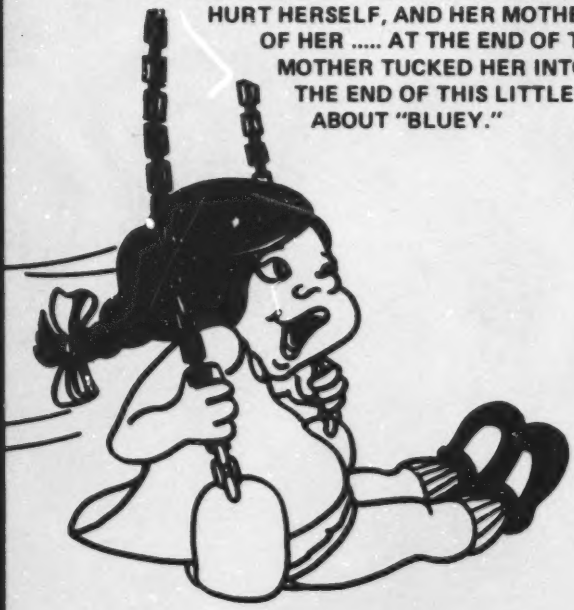
"BLUEY" REMEMBERED NOT TO JUMP OFF THE SWING BECAUSE HER FRIEND HAD JUMPED OFF THE SWING AND SPRAINED HER ANKLE.

"BLUEY" REMEMBERED NOT TO PUSH ANYBODY BEFORE THEY WERE READY, BECAUSE THEY MIGHT FALL OFF THE SWING AND GET HURT.

SO, "BLUEY" DID EVERYTHING SAFE. SHE DID NOT CLIMB UP THE SLIDING BOARD.

"BLUEY" ALSO DID NOT JUMP OFF THE SWING, AND SHE HELD ON TO THE CHAIN IN CASE ANYONE PUSHED HER.

WHEN "BLUEY" RETURNED HOME, SHE HAD NOT HURT HERSELF, AND HER MOTHER WAS PROUD OF HER ..... AT THE END OF THE DAY HER MOTHER TUCKED HER INTO BED. THAT IS THE END OF THIS LITTLE SHORT STORY ABOUT "BLUEY."



9

ADULT'S CORNER

Happy playful children who are very eager to release themselves on the playground often forget what they have been told or never really understood about ways of having fun safely on the playground. These materials are designed to assist children in learning safe play habits on the playground and to continue to reinforce that learning.

To a child, a playground is anywhere—at school, down the block, at a friend's house, or in the backyard. Since adults cannot always be around to assist children to learn playground safety behavior, the importance of selecting the right equipment cannot be overemphasized. It must be installed and maintained correctly and consistently and, more importantly, children must be taught and reminded how to use playground equipment safely.

Play is in the nature of children. It is not merely an "extra" or inconsequential part of a child's life. It is through play that children imitate adults and learn adult habits; through play they learn to be social beings—they learn how to interact with others, to take turns, to share, and to cooperate. Through play, children first learn about life by imagining, creating, and designing their own life situations. They learn to think through play; to live out their dreams. They develop muscles and muscle coordination; they learn how healthy physical play is for them—how it helps them to grow and strengthen their bodies.

Play, therefore, is important to children and to all parents and adults. If children are to grow and learn, they must do so safely. Toys and games, bicycles, sports equipment, swimming pools and playground equipment must be designed with safety in mind.

It is natural that children will roughhouse on the playground. This type of behavior, however, sometimes leads to accidents. It is necessary, therefore, to change the child's behavior. In trying to motivate children toward playing safely, the positive approach is preferred. Children should not be frightened into changing their behavior on the playground. The idea of "Play Happy, Play Safely" should be emphasized—for example, "Sit in the swing," or

"Hold on with both hands" rather than "Don't fool around on the monkey bars."

Older children should be taught that it is important for them to play safely because younger brothers and sisters will imitate them. They should be encouraged to take the responsibility of helping younger children play safely on the playground and on equipment that is appropriate for their age group.

You can play an instrumental role in helping children learn to "Play Happy, Play Safely."

You can teach children how to use each type of playground equipment by pointing out the following safe play habits to them:

SWINGS

Tell children to:

- —Sit in the center of the swing; never stand or kneel.
- —Hold on with both hands.
- —Stop the swing before getting off.
- —Walk way around the swing—not too close to the front or the back.
- —Never push anyone else in the swing or allow others to push them.
- —Have one person in one swing at one time.
- —Avoid swinging empty swings, and to never twist swing chains.
- —Avoid putting head and feet through exercise rings on the swing sets.

SLIDES

Instruct children to:

- —Hold on with both hands as they go up the steps of the slide, taking one step at a time; never go up the sliding surface or the frame.
- —Keep at least one arm's length between children.
- —Slide down feet first, always sitting up, one at a time.
- —Be sure no one is in front of the slide before sliding down.
- —Be patient, avoid pushing or shoving, and to wait their turn.
- —Leave the bottom of the slide after they have taken their turn.
- —Never use a metal slide that has been sitting in the sun.

CLIMBING APPARATUS

(geodesic domes or arches and jungle gyms)

Tell children to:

- —Use the correct grip; use both hands.
- —Be careful of climbing down, and to watch out for those climbing up.
- —Avoid having too many people using the apparatus at one time.

(horizontal ladders and bars)

- —Start at the same end of the apparatus and move in the same direction.
- —Stay well behind the person in front and watch out for swinging feet.
- —Never use apparatus when it is wet.
- —Avoid speed contests or trying to cover too large a distance in one move.
- —Drop from the bars with knees slightly bent and land on both feet.

SEESAWS

Instruct children to:

- —Sit facing each other, not leaning back.
- —Keep a firm hold with both hands.
- —Never stand or run on the board.
- —Keep feet out from underneath the board as it descends.

SUMMARY

Children should be encouraged to care about themselves and the health and happiness of playmates on the playground.

They should be told how important it is for them to exercise, to take care of their bodies, to grow strong and healthy (like Mom or Dad or some sports or cartoon hero).

It is important that adults take the time to learn about playground safety for the sake of the children—to be properly motivated to protect all children from unnecessary hurt and risks in their play.

Help the children you come in contact with play happy, and play safely.